

Oral French Communication in French Immersion Canadian and World Studies

Classrooms: A Primer for Educators

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Abstract

This project presents a primer for secondary French Immersion teachers that facilitates the use of French oral communicative activities in secondary Canadian and World Studies courses. The primer supports collaborative and inclusive teaching strategies that invite students to speak and develop their oral French communication skills. The primer is divided into 2 main components: (a) Rationale for the Primer, and (b) the Strategies themselves, comprising succinct descriptions as well as potential uses and suggestions. A critical content analysis of various Ontario Ministry of Education documents was undertaken in order to explore the importance of oral communication in second-language learning in Ontario secondary schools. Furthermore, holistic and invitational education perspectives were examined in order to define the advantages of collaborative learning. Moreover, research in the stream of French Immersion studies was also referenced to frame the relevance of second-language learning and the significant role the French Immersion teacher plays. The aforementioned research contributes to the advancement of theory and practice regarding the importance of opportunities for oral French communication in secondary Canadian and World Studies courses.

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Dedication

In honour of my considerate grandfather who provided the love for learning, support, and inspiration that made this work possible.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This project involved the creation of a primer to encourage the use of French oral communicative activities in secondary French Immersion Canadian and World Studies courses. Upon classroom use of the various strategies, French-language learners are given the opportunity to engage in meaningful dialogue that promotes the development of oral French communication skills. These pedagogical activities would respond to the seeming ambivalence and hesitance of French Immersion students to practice French, as explored by MacIntyre, Burns, and Jessome (2011). Additionally, there is a current need to challenge the perceived ill-preparedness or ill-equipment of French Immersion students to communicate in the French language.

The primer responds to these needs as it attempts to offer curricular-relevant learning activities that provide meaningful and authentic oral communicative experiences for students in the French language. This literacy package aligns with the Ontario Ministry of Education's (2014) aim of giving students the tools "to communicate and interact with growing confidence in French, one of Canada's official languages, while developing the knowledge, skills, and perspectives [needed] to participate fully as citizens in Canada and in the world" (p. 6). In addition, this primer is also offering students the opportunity to gain confidence in the French language through cooperative and invitational learning activities.

Rationale for the Research Project

Students at the secondary French Immersion level are not often given the opportunity to develop their oral communication skills in French. In their Canadian and World Studies courses, there is a lack of willingness amongst students to communicate.

The perceived ambivalence of French Immersion students to communicate in French is problematic. MacIntyre et al. (2011) noted how immersion students lack confidence in their competencies and are sometimes fearful of mockery for speaking French (p. 81). This may stem from French Immersion students' lack of self-assurance or ill-preparedness in their language skills. To foster the development of and confidence in French-language learners' oral communication skills, authentic opportunities for meaningful dialogue need to take place. French Immersion teachers can combat this trend and encourage students to participate in collaborative and oral communicative activities that inspire risk-taking in learning.

Purpose of the Research Project

The purpose of this project is to create a primer for secondary Canadian and World Studies French Immersion teachers with ready-to-use collaborative and oral communicative activities. As Swain (1996) asserts, the act of unilingual English-speaking students producing language is a significant component of French Immersion learning (p. 90) and merits further discussion. The primer will offer French Immersion Canadian and World Studies teachers an assortment of activities based on their needs in the classroom. As such, the primer is divided into 2 main components: (a) Rationale for the Primer, and (b) the Strategies themselves, with concise descriptions and suggestions for implementation. The content in this primer will be beneficial to French Immersion teachers, French Immersion students, and to any stakeholders wishing to incorporate collaborative and oral communicative activities in French language-learning environments.

Justification for the Research Project

More recently, scholars such as Turnbull, Cormier, and Bourque (2012) have highlighted the inadequate quality of linguistic output in content-heavy subjects in French Immersion students. As a result, these second-language learners “speak infrequently in French and when they do, their production is limited to a few words (Turnbull et al., 2012, p. 183). This research project is one attempt to improve students’ oral communication skills and, moreover, to offer students the opportunity to speak French in different Canadian and World Studies subject areas. As a result, students are also engaging in activities that promote collaboration and are creating a classroom culture that promotes student voice. As Ragoonaden (2011) discusses, for the French Immersion program to reach maximum benefits, the program needs to be more real and authentic in its attempt to “make French more relevant in the lives of second languages learners by developing their expressive skills” (p. 308). This primer offers teachers a selection of activities to choose from based on their respective course’s needs and individual student expectations.

As per the Ontario Ministry of Education (2014), strong skills in oral communication are crucial when developing competent skills in the French language. According to its official documents, strong skills in oral communication form the foundation for the advancement of skills in reading and writing (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014, p. 9). As such, the primer aims to develop oral communication skills in its provision of activities to promote collaboration and oral communication.

Background to the Research Project

With an aim of the French Immersion program being “to use French to communicate and interact effectively in a variety of social settings” (Ontario Ministry of

Education, 2014, p. 6), it is the role of the French Immersion teacher to implement the required strategies to reach this goal. As such, I approached this research project from the perspective of a secondary French Immersion teacher in an Ontario public school board. I teach courses in the Canadian and World Studies department under the helm of the French Immersion program. For example, I follow the Canadian History, Geography, and Civics curriculum wherein the language of instruction is in French. Having a Francophone background, I feel a strong passion for and associate much meaning to speaking the French language. Unfortunately, I have witnessed my students struggle with maintaining their conversations and dialogue in French. Moreover, there is a lack of confidence for speaking in French that exists and these French immersion students, as Roy (2010) outlines, “might not see themselves as learners of French and [as] not [being] a legitimate group in Canadian society” (p. 557).

I have incorporated several collaborative and oral-communicative activities within my Canadian and World Studies course plans and have noticed greater oral communication from my students. I am not certain whether students feel more comfortable in the language of instruction, and decide to take a risk in speaking French, or whether or not students feel they are safe to speak based off the community that was created. These activities will service the purpose of meeting curricular expectations as well as meeting the needs of diverse learners in the creation of an inviting and engaging learning environment. However, what can be inferred is that students are speaking French more freely and are able to communicate in French with more ease. As such, a primer with sample activities for oral communicative and collaborative activities is of use to secondary French Immersion teachers of Canadian and World Studies courses.

Scope and Limitations of the Research Project

With any research project, there are limitations. While I am exploring the importance of oral French communication skills in Canadian and World Studies subjects, these skills are equally important in other departments such as in Mathematics and Science. Canadian and World Studies courses are the ones under investigation as they lend themselves well to my professional experience. Furthermore, the activities shared to promote oral French communication and collaboration in the secondary courses may be adapted to fit subjects at the elementary level as well as in different subject areas in the secondary stream. Moreover, there is room for modification to suit any educator or class's purpose.

There is also the unwillingness of educators in the French Immersion program to engage students in activities that promote the development of their oral language skills in French. Many teachers are under the impression that despite teaching in the French Immersion Department, the content of the particular course is of utmost importance. As a result, the development of students' expressive skills in French is viewed as being the responsibility of teachers in the French Department. While the benefits of creating an environment in which students feel free to speak and practice their oral French communication skills are clear, encouraging all educators in the French Immersion program to take part in such an endeavour might prove challenging.

Definitions of Core French, Extended French, and French Immersion

In Ontario schools, there exist three different French as a Second Language (FSL) programs: Core French, Extended French, and French Immersion—all of which differ based on intensity and the individual student's needs. In Core French, "students are

taught French as a subject” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014, p. 15). Next, in Extended French, “students learn French as a subject and French serves as the language of instruction in at least one other subject” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014, p. 15). At the conclusion of the program, students accumulate seven Extended French credits, four of which are FSL credits and three for other courses in which French is the language of instruction. At secondary graduation, the high school may grant these students with a certificate of recognition for participation in the program. Finally, in French Immersion, “students learn French as a subject and French serves as the language of instruction in two or more other subjects” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014, p. 16). Students accumulate 10 French Immersion credits, four of which are FSL credits and the remaining six are for other courses in which French is the language of instruction. Just as with the Extended French program, students may be granted a certificate of recognition for participation in the program upon high school graduation. For the purpose of this project, French Immersion will be the program under study as it is the one with which I am most familiar.

Outline of the Remainder of the Document

In chapter 2, I present key findings from the literature related to the importance of French oral communication skills in French Immersion programs as well as the importance of collaborative group activities. Specifically, I address different theories of language-learning and invitational theory, and then speculate about how they are relevant to learners in French Immersion programs.

Building from this literature base, I then outline the procedures taken to complete the content analysis. Its findings guide the information found in my primer for educators

of French Immersion secondary Canadian and World Studies courses. Chapter 3 details the development process of the primer and further information for evaluation and revision of it in order to implement in different subject areas. Chapter 4 comprises the primer itself, entitled *Primer for French Immersion Teachers in Canadian and World Studies: Resource Primer of French Oral Communicative Strategies*. The primer is divided into 2 main sections: (a) Rationale for the Primer and (b) the Strategies themselves, with brief descriptions and suggestions for implementation.

Chapter 5 offers a summary of the major research project and offers a discussion of its key findings from the literature review and the critical content analysis. Chapter 5 further discusses the theoretical, practical, and future areas of study for stakeholders in French Immersion or French as a Second Language learning programs.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

In chapter 2, I review recurrent and important themes related to the development of oral communication skills in French. In learning communities, the progression of such a skill set is essential to any second-language learning. I begin the literature review by examining the cognitive and cultural benefits of second-language learning. Once the advantages of mastering a second language are discussed, I explore the value of oral communication in the development of French-language skills. Following this analysis, I examine research arguing the existing weaknesses in the speaking skills of French Immersion students. After considering the need for further opportunities for oral communication in French Immersion Canadian and World Studies courses, I review the potential usefulness of authentic and meaningful learning opportunities for students within the classroom setting. Subsequently, I look closely at Invitational Theory and its potential role in encouraging skills of oral communication. After examining the research and theory related to French-language learning and its current gaps, I consider the Grades 9-10 French as a Second Language and Grades 9-10 Canadian World Studies curriculum documents for opportunity and space to implement strategies and activities conducive to the development of skills in oral communication for French Immersion students. Finally, I conclude the chapter with a succinct overview of the central notions that form the groundwork for this project.

Benefits of Second-Language Learning

The existence of second-language instructional programs in Ontario schools, such as French Immersion, offers interested stakeholders an array of contentious issues. Most are related to the potential benefits of learning a second language. The seminal

comparative study of intelligence led by Peal and Lambert (1962) is instrumental in its findings and for its application to French-language learning. In this project, with a sample of 110 bilingual and monolingual 10-year old children from the same school system and socio-economic class, it was found that bilingual students demonstrate added mental flexibility, an ability to think more independently of words, superiority in concept formation, and a more diversified intelligence than monolingual students. Furthermore, Baker (2006) explored divergent and convergent thinking between bilingual and monolingual students. As an example, he asked the question, “How many uses can you think of for a brick?” and based on his results, concluded that bilingual individuals are more fluent (able to provide a higher number of acceptable answers), and more flexible and creative in their answers to open-ended questions in comparison to monolingual individuals. As discussed in Lazaruk (2007), Baker associates this finding to a heightened “elasticity in thinking” (p. 617) in bilingual individuals, which he links to their having access to two or more words for a concept or idea. As evidenced, there are clear and tangible cognitive benefits to second-language learning.

Further to this discussion, the Office of the Canadian Commissioner of Official Languages reported that the learning of a second language plays a role in the development of interpersonal and social skills. It was shown that those “who master more than one language increase their self-confidence and self-esteem and are more at ease with others” (Adam, 2005, p. 107). As Lazaruk (2007) discusses, “learning French enables students to communicate with a wide variety of people, both in Canada and internationally; it fosters respect for different cultures and facilitates access to two worlds of experience” (p. 622). Lazaruk expands his premise in proposing that students who

show proficiency in both French and English have more prospects in terms of employment opportunities. For example, the Public Service Commission of Canada is “among the most bilingual employers in Canada, 39.2% of whose 165,679 positions are bilingual” (Lazaruk, 2007, p. 622).

To add to the discussion, Parkin and Turcotte (2004) stress economic benefits as the most popular reason for second-language learning in Canada. Their research indicates that 88% of Canadians believe that “in today’s global economy, people with an ability to speak more than one language will be more successful” (p. 21). More specifically, 82% of Canadians believe that if you speak French as well as English, there is a better chance of finding solid employment (p. 21). In addition, Parkin and Turcotte found that 85% of Canadians believe that learning a second language is one of the more fulfilling things that you can do for yourself as a person” (p. 21). According to Lazaruk, this supports the notion that second-language learning is not only important in an economic sense, but closely linked to an appreciation of Canada’s linguistic duality. For example, “two-thirds of respondents placed the presence of two official languages among those elements that define what it means to be Canadian” (p. 622).

Also, the Ontario Ministry of Education’s (2013a) *Framework for French as a Second Language in Ontario Schools* supports the aforementioned importance of second-language learning and identifies how “in an era of increased globalization, it is critical to heighten students’ awareness that English-French bilingualism is an economic and cultural asset both within Canada and beyond” (p. 3). As a result, students become more valuable commodities being able to communicate in both French and English, two globally recognized languages.

In the realm of 21st-century education, the advantages of second-language learning are clear. Developing skills in the French language provide students with cognitive, interpersonal, and economic benefits.

Importance and Need for Opportunities to Practice Oral Communication

In the study of French Immersion, there is ongoing dialogue for there to be more opportunity given to French Immersion students to speak in French. With oral communication being one of the four strands in Ontario's French as a Second Language curriculum, there should be meaningful chances for students to speak French. Lazaruk (2007) ascertains that "while graduates of [French] Immersion programs are generally effective communicators with high levels of proficiency... they rarely attain native-like proficiency in all areas" (p. 608). Cummins (2001) also found that "French Immersion students reach native-like levels in French listening comprehension and reading skills, although they are still clearly distinguishable from native Francophones in speaking and writing skills" (p. 97). Swain (1996) also found speaking, along with writing, to be the most challenging skill area for French Immersion students. He discusses "speaking [being] the weakest of the four skill areas for immersion students and as with their writing skills, their weaknesses tend to be grammatical and lexical in source" (p. 94). As a result, Swain underwent a series of observations in grammatical and vocabulary instruction as well as teachers' error construction. One significant observation was "that only 19% of the grammatical errors students made were corrected, while the remainder were ignored by the teachers" (p. 97). This consistent pattern indicates how students are not pushed towards a more accurate and coherent set of speaking skills.

Swain (1996) also supports the connections between form and function wherein students are learning content and applying it in meaningful settings. Furthermore, the author encourages the use of “instructional approaches which emphasize group and collaborative learning... in order to provide opportunities for students to ‘stretch’ their interlanguage to accommodate their new knowledge in extended discourse and negotiated interaction” (p. 102). These opportunities allow students to practice their new knowledge in authentic and genuine situations. Cummins (2014) recently stated how, “with respect to French skills, [French Immersion] students’ receptive skills are better developed than are their expressive skills (p. 3). Moreover, these students “are close to the level of native speakers in understanding and reading of formal French, but there are significant gaps between them and native speakers in spoken and written French” (Cummins, 2014, p. 3). Again, this finding is attributed to the absence of authentic French learning opportunities, more specifically, outside of the classroom. Furthermore, it is very rare for French Immersion students to engage in French media at home (i.e., television, music, and literature), which limits their exposure to authentic French learning occasions.

For any real oral communicative development to occur in French Immersion students, meaningful and collaborative opportunities to speak French are required. Ragoonaden (2011) further investigates this need for authentic learning experiences to improve the speaking skills of French Immersion students. Aware of the inaccuracies in the oral and written productions of these students, the author refers to Cummins’s (1998) belief that for a French Immersion program to meet its maximum potential, its students need to be given opportunities to communicate in authentic situations in the French language. Ragoonaden also suggests that experiential teaching methods and efforts to

communicate with native speakers be the solution, focusing on the use of “experiential teaching materials [and the] support of virtual media [holding] the key to promoting a willingness to use [the French language] in settings other than the school context and may resolve the issues related to grammatical and linguistic inaccuracies” (p. 308). This proposal is relevant in its role of creating a collaborative and participatory learning culture as will be explored later.

The French as a Second Language (FSL) Student Proficiency and Confidence Pilot Project 2013-2014 is a recent Ontario Ministry of Education initiative that focused on the concepts embedded in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR)*. The latter document, one that is universally recognized and that is gaining greater recognition in the educational system in Ontario, consists of four components that distinguish between the ability to produce and comprehend language. According to the Council of Europe (1971), the CEFR “describes in a comprehensive way what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively” (p. 1). It provides a common basis in terms of objectives, content and assessment with clearly stated levels of proficiency (“I can...” statements), in which learners can use to monitor their own learning.

In referring to the Council of Europe and the CEFR in its study, the Ministry pilot project, *The French as a Second Language (FSL) Student Proficiency and Confidence Pilot Project 2013-2014*, asked 434 Grade 12 volunteer FSL students from Core, Extended, or Immersion programs from 14 different Ontario school boards to take part. Students completed “the Diplôme d’études en langue française (DEL F), an

internationally recognized exam, and responded to a survey exploring student confidence” (Rehner, 2014, p. 1). It is important to note that this examination aligned itself with the CEFR guidelines.

With respect to French proficiency, this study concluded that “increased focus could be encouraged, in particular, on oral comprehension and written production abilities, specifically as related to the application of grammar and vocabulary” (Rehner, 2014, p. 3). In addition, it was found that students appeared to be most confident in their reading skills and least confident in their conversing skills. Likewise, students “are more confident in their written skills than in their oral skills and generally, more confident in their receptive skills than in their productive skills” (Rehner, 2014, p. 8).

Correspondingly, it is worth noting learners “are more confident in their French skills in communication with non-Francophones than with Francophones, with individuals than in large groups, and with friends than with strangers” (Rehner, 2014, p. 8). These suggestions support the notion of improving areas of oral communication in French in order to build confidence in learners’ abilities. Speaking a second language involves risk-taking, and with students being fearful of making mistakes and failing, they do not take the risks necessary to further their development and learning. What is needed is a safe and inviting classroom environment in which students can take risks to improve their oral communicative skills in French. Meaningful and relevant opportunities to converse in French while collaborating and interacting with peers, is what students require for optimal development of French oral communicative skills. In the next section, the need for authentic learning opportunities will be discussed in order for students to develop their French speaking abilities.

Authentic Learning Opportunities

Opportunities for authentic learning are crucial for second-language learning in order to truly master the French language. Authentic learning can be understood as “opportunities to solve real-life complex ... problems that have meaning [to the lives of students] and/or the greater society” (Strimel, 2014, p. 8). Strimel ascertains that “the only way to plan an authentic learning experience is to make sure the work has a direct application to the real world” (p. 10). Current challenges to implementing authentic learning in the classroom are due to a number of factors including time constraints, cost factors, or simply teachers being unaware of, or unwilling to implement such activities. However, as Lombardi (2007) outlines in his work, authentic learning experiences can take many forms; for example, wherein teachers provide real-life situations, allow multiple perspectives, require collaboration, drive student investigations or research, or allocate time for reflection (p. 3). According to Herrington (2003), “authentic settings have the capability to motivate and encourage learner participation by facilitating students’ willing suspension of disbelief” (p. 70). Once enthralled in authentic learning activities, students have the potential to gain a skill set that is transferable to their lives outside the classroom. When approached with the challenge of French Immersion students being ill-prepared or confident to speak in French, providing them with opportunities to speak through authentic, real-life experiences could foster proficiency and self-assurance.

Likewise, two key themes found within an authentic learning opportunity are those of cooperative learning and collaboration. First, cooperative learning refers to “a set

of instructional methods in which students work in small, mixed-ability learning groups” (Slavin, 1987, p. 12) in order to master a common goal. In these groups, students might be solving a central problem, discussing ideas, sharing opinions, or asking questions. Nevertheless, students are interacting and dialoguing in order to build new knowledge. During this discussion, *collaboration* is occurring. Students are using one another in order for learning to occur. Rosenholtz (1989) characterizes collaboration as being a system in which “instructional goals are shared goals, and the norms of the culture are those of ... continuous improvement, and optimism that all students can learn” (as cited in Fink, 1992, p. 24). Therefore, it is clear that in a collaborative learning environment, students, as well as the teacher, work together and assist each other in finding success. In this example, the classroom can be described as having a culture of care in which all students have the ability to learn.

There are marked connections between cooperative and collaborative learning strategies and authentic learning activities. In order for students to create knowledge and solve meaningful problems, it is essential for learners to work cooperatively and collaboratively with their teacher and their peers. Students who feel they are supported in their learning and who feel safe to take risks may progress. Invitational Theory is a pedagogical tool that has the potential to offer support for this essential learning need.

Invitational Theory in the Classroom

Invitational Theory refers to a series of values and assumptions that can be applied to several different contexts. According to Purkey (1992), Invitational Theory provide[s] a means of intentionally summoning people to realize their relatively boundless potential in all areas of worthwhile human endeavor. Its purpose is to

address the entire global nature of human existence and opportunity, and to make life a more exciting, satisfying and enriching experience. (p. 5)

When applied in a classroom setting, Invitational Theory provides the means to create a classroom culture in which all students have a voice and feel safe to take risks in their learning. When applied to a French Immersion setting, when students feel supported and encouraged by their peers, this may in turn allow them to engage in meaningful dialogue in French. As a result, this may contribute to the development of oral communication in French.

Providing a thorough overview of Invitational Theory is necessary in order to fully understand the reasons as to why and how its inclusion in the classroom can be conducive to a safe, encouraging, and risk-taking culture. Once strategies and activities are created based on notions of Invitational Theory, students have the opportunity to collaborate with their peers in an environment where motivation is the key element and where students feel reassured to develop their French speaking skills. In order to create this ideal learning environment, it is important to note the four guiding principles upon which Invitational Theory functions. These four guiding values include trust, respect, optimism, and intentionality. These principles or assumptions must exist in order for students to feel safe in communicating their thoughts and ideas in addition to practicing and developing their French speaking skills.

Purkey (1992) refers to the first assumption, trust, as a need for students to recognize their interdependence and interconnectedness to one another. Purkey mentions how “given an optimally inviting environment, each person will find his or her own best ways of being and becoming” (p. 8). Furthermore, trust “involves hope for the future and

behaviours based on reliability, consistency, dependability, personal authenticity, and truthfulness (Shaw & Siegel, 2010, p. 107). Consequently, if the aforementioned features are supported, an inviting culture is fostered. If a trusting environment exists within the classroom, students will be willing to be present and active participants. As applied to a language-learning setting, students will feel a sense of security and will be more so willing to speak French.

Respect is a second assumption underlying Invitational Theory. It supposes that “people are valuable, able, and responsible and should be treated accordingly” (Shaw & Siegel, 2010, p. 108). Furthermore, the notion of *mutual respect* has utmost significance when implementing facets of Invitational Theory in the classroom. As Kitchens and Wenta (2007) discuss, “each person is different and brings value and talent to a school” (p. 37). Thus, in an established culture that promotes respect, every individual has a voice and is invited to share it. In a classroom that values respect for all individuals, students demonstrate an appreciation of the unique strengths that their peers bring to the learning environment. When an atmosphere of respect is created, students are more willing to take risks in their learning.

Optimism is a third assumption of Invitational Theory. It is understood as being “a viewpoint individuals choose to take of the world and others based on the wish or hope for positive outcomes” (Shaw & Siegel, 2010, p. 107). Invitational Theory is developed upon the notion that all individuals have the potential to succeed. According to Purkey (1992), “people possess untapped potential in all areas of human endeavor. The uniqueness of human beings is that no clear limits to potential have been discovered” (p. 8). Accordingly, it is vital that optimism be present in the way in which we view

ourselves, work with others, evaluate, and lead our lives. In a classroom setting, it has to be an underlying belief that all can succeed if given the appropriate tools to do so.

Students will share with their peers when they feel that they are believed in. In addition, students will feel reassured to practice their French speaking skills when they feel inspired by their teacher and fellow classmates.

Finally, trust, respect, and optimism are executed upon the final assumption of Invitational Theory, which is intentionality. Intentionality relates to the thought process involved in our decision-making. More specifically, intentionality refers to “teachers knowing *what* they’re doing, *why* they’re doing it, and being selective with *how* they’re doing it” (Kitchens & Wenta, 2007, p. 37). According to Purkey (1992), “intentionality enables people to create and maintain total environments that consistently and dependably invite the realization of human potential” (p. 9). Furthermore, there is an internal analysis of the self and others when attempting to be inviting. Purkey describes an invitation as being “an intentional act designed to offer something beneficial for consideration” (p. 9), and explored this using four levels of intentionality.

According to Purkey (1992), the levels “provide a check system to monitor [our decisions and actions] found in and around any human endeavor and that reflect invitational theory in action” (p. 10). As humans, there is a tendency to function at a different level given the situation that one finds oneself. The four levels of Invitational Theory allow one to identify where one stands with intentionality in one’s personal and professional life.

Invitational Theory refers to the practice of inviting behaviour on a personal and professional level in order to create a safe and caring environment. Attached to an

educational standpoint, activities used in tandem with Invitational Theory have the potential to create classroom cultures that invite the sharing of voices, collaboration, and teamwork. Once a foundation of trust, respect, and optimism are created within the classroom, students will feel equipped to dialogue and share with their peers. The French language will no longer serve as a barrier to discussion, but rather will be an invited task. Through authentic and inviting instructional activities, French Immersion students may feel a level of comfort to practice conversation in French while tackling discussion of a curricular matter.

Rationale for Oral Communication in Grades 9–10 French Immersion

The goal of the French as a Second Language secondary curriculum for Grades 9 to 12 is to “use French to communicate and interact effectively in a variety of social settings” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014, p. 6). The Ontario Ministry of Education (2014) ascertains that in order to meet such an aim, students need “to acquire a strong oral foundation in the French language and focus on communicating in French” (p. 6). This document also identifies the four strands that target all areas of language use and upon which FSL programs are organized: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The importance of speaking is highlighted in its discussion of how “high-quality FSL programs should provide daily opportunities for students to engage in various oral activities in connection with expectations in all four strands” (p. 6). As a result, these oral communicative opportunities are expected to take precedence in the FSL classroom. Students who are consistently asked to practice their oral communicative skills in French “not only enhance their competence in communicating information, but also explore and come to understand ideas and concepts” (p. 23). As such, speaking and oral

communication skills are of utmost importance for the mastery of an FSL program, and in particular, French Immersion.

While the Ontario Ministry of Education demands the presence of oral communicative activities in the French Immersion program, the implementation of authentic and inviting strategies would be meaningful. French Immersion students would have the potential to co-create a safe and inviting classroom culture while simultaneously sharing their opinions and ideas in the target language.

Rationale for Oral Communication in Grades 9–10 Canadian and World Studies

In all subjects in the Canadian and World Studies curriculum for Grades 9 and 10, which include Geography, History, and Civics, the goal is to help students “develop the ability to use concepts of ‘disciplinary thinking’ to investigate issues, events, and developments” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013b, p. 6). In other words, the curriculum is developed in a way that encourages students to think critically about significant events related to their curricular learning, as well as their lives outside of the classroom. Furthermore, the aim is for students not to “simply learn various facts but that they develop the ability to think and to process content in ways best suited to each subject” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013b, p. 13). The three aforementioned intermediate courses in Canadian and World Studies each have their own set of concepts of “disciplinary thinking” that refer to their own way of thinking and analyzing subject matter. Students can make use of these concepts when “engaged in the inquiry process, whether they are conducting an investigation that involves the process as a whole or are applying specific skills related to different components of that process as they work toward achieving a given expectation” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013b, p. 13). For

example, a Grade 10 History teacher may ask students to analyze a given event using a historical perspective, one of the concepts of disciplinary thinking, in order to investigate multiple perspectives.

The Canadian and World Studies curriculum clearly states how “effective instruction is key to student success” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013b, p. 38) and that it “should help students acquire the knowledge, skills, and attributes they need in order to achieve the curriculum expectations and to be able to think critically throughout their lives about issues related to Geography, History and Civics” (p. 39). In addition, the document also refers to important habits of mind that need to be instilled in students such as curiosity; open-mindedness; a willingness to think, question, challenge, and be challenged; and an awareness of the value of listening or reading closely and communicating clearly” (p. 39). These skills form the foundation of courses in the Canadian and World Studies curriculum and can be developed through oral and invitational communicative activities.

French Immersion students are required to engage in oral communicative activities to develop their speaking skills. I believe authentic and inviting pedagogical strategies can create a classroom environment in which students feel safe to share ideas and to speak in French. What the Canadian and World Studies curriculum offers is a means to practice the French language while engaging in authentic and meaningful curricular discussion topics and subjects. While the French Immersion curriculum presents a series of expectations to develop students’ speaking skills, the Canadian and World Studies curriculum provides teachers with the content in order to develop these skills. Realistically, it is practical for French Immersion teachers to reference the

expectations from both curricular documents in order to create an engaging and oral communicative-skill building environment. In addition to the implementation of these expectations, a classroom environment that is founded on Invitational Theory has the potential to provide optimal learning conditions for authentic and meaningful dialogue in French.

Summary of the Literature Review

This literature review examined the benefits of second-language learning, more particularly, the advantages of mastering the French language in Canada. It was determined that students engaged in a second language have added cognitive, interpersonal, and economic advantages than those enrolled in regular curricular programming. However, in spite of these advantages, the need for added skill development in French oral communication was established. While students are provided opportunities to develop their reading, writing, listening, and speaking abilities in the French Immersion program, numerous reports indicate that there are significant weaknesses in students' speaking skills. These were attributed to a lack of proficiency, confidence, and self-assurance in French Immersion students. In light of these findings, there is a need to offer students added opportunities to practice their speaking skills in French.

The best way to address French oral communication skills would be through the use of authentic and collaborative learning opportunities in the classroom. The literature clearly demonstrated that when students are engaged in meaningful activities wherein they work together with their peers to master content, they are more likely to take risks in their learning and communicate their ideas in the target language. To provide students with an environment that can make this happen, Invitational Theory was explored. It is a

theory that ties authentic learning strategies to the improvement of oral communication skills in French.

The implementation of Invitational Theory assumes four central principles of trust, respect, optimism, and intentionality. The presence of these values has the potential to create a safe and respectful learning environment in which students can take risks in their learning. The Ontario Ministry of Education curriculum that would allow for the most robust oral discussion is the French Immersion Grades 9–10 Canadian and World Studies document. Therefore, it was examined in an attempt to identify content area where the implementation of authentic and inviting learning activities for French Immersion students would best be implemented while developing their oral French communicative skills.

The next chapter will outline the research methodology used in developing the primer.

CHAPTER THREE: RATIONALE AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the rationale and methodology used in the development of the primer, entitled, *Primer for French Immersion Teachers in Canadian and World Studies: Resource Primer of French Oral Communicative Strategies*. This chapter is organized under various sections that review the rationale, design, procedure, and limitations embedded in the primer. The chapter begins with a discussion of the rationale and personal relevance entrenched in the creation of the project. Next, data collection through the examination of relevant literature is described. Finally, limitations and opportunity for improvement in the primer are discussed.

Rationale

Participants in French Immersion programs represent a distinct percentage of Ontario students and require pedagogical approaches that cater to their role of second-language learners. The recent *Framework for French as a Second Language in Ontario Schools: Kindergarten to Grade 12* discusses the Ministry of Education's "commitment to improving the effectiveness of FSL education in Ontario [and how] it is strengthened by an awareness and appreciation of the many proven benefits of learning an additional language" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013a, p. 3). However, while the provincial governing body is compelled to promote French language learning in its schools, it is the duty of classroom teachers to assist students in developing their oral communicative skills in French. More specifically, as the *Student Proficiency and Confidence Pilot Project 2013-2014: A Synopsis of Findings* suggests, students "were found to be most confident in their reading skills and markedly least confident in their conversing skills"

(Rehmer, 2014, p. 8). Consequently, it becomes an important task for French Immersion teachers to foster the development of their students' speaking skills in French.

To respond to the gaps in French Immersion students' oral communicative abilities in French, the written curriculum informally offer recommendations. First, the *Ontario Grades 9 and 10: Canadian and World Studies* curriculum presents complex subject matter that offers French Immersion students meaningful opportunity to practice and develop their skills in oral communication. Not only does it have a vision for its Geography, History, and Civics courses to “enable students to become responsible, active citizens within the diverse communities in which they belong [but it has a goal of] building collaborative and cooperative working relationships” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013b, p. 6) through an examination of its curricular content.

An exploration of the aforementioned courses' rigorous curriculum with a classroom culture that uses an Invitational Theory lens, wherein students are invited “to realize their relatively boundless potential in all areas of worthwhile human endeavor” (Purkey, 1992, p. 5), offers students the opportunity to improve their speaking skills in French. Asking students to engage in a series of pedagogical strategies in the target language—French—in an environment that encourages care and respect, allows students to develop their oral communicative abilities.

Situating the Research: Personal Relevance

As a teacher in various French Immersion secondary school settings, I have had the opportunity to teach courses in the Canadian and World Studies department. Anecdotally, I have noted a lack of French oral communication taking place in the heavier content courses of Geography, History, and Civics in the Canadian and World

Studies department. I have attributed this absence of French speaking to a reluctance and lack of confidence on the part of French Immersion students. While they may have ideas and opinions to share during opportunities for discussion, they may not feel equipped or self-confident in doing so. The *Student Proficiency and Confidence Pilot Project 2013-2014: A Synopsis of Findings* supports these anecdotal observations and recommends there be “an increased focus ... on oral comprehension and [written production abilities] ... and the need to broaden the types of pedagogical strategies and specific interventions used in teaching these skills in the various FSL programs” (Rehmer, 2014, p. 8).

Collaborative activities that invite students to work together in their knowledge-building have established themselves as effective learning approaches. Combining the use of cooperative pedagogical strategies with an Invitational Theory perspective creates a classroom culture that promotes an open dialogue as well as student participation. As a result, students may feel safe and cared for and have a level of confidence to share opinions and perspectives. As Purkey (1992) describes, when Invitational Theory is used in the classroom, “it carries the basic message that human potential, while not always evident, is always there, waiting to be discovered and invited forth” (p. 15). Essentially, a classroom of care wherein student voice is at the forefront is fostered.

Development of the Primer

The development of the primer began with a thorough analysis of literature and research in the fields of second-language learning, Invitational Theory, and French Immersion education as well as an examination of various Ontario Ministry of Education curriculum documents. Journal articles, edited books, and numerous ministry documents were examined in the early literature review phase in order to establish a need for the

primer. Journal articles were retrieved from the Academic Search Complete, ERIC, and Education Search Complete databases and curriculum documents were referenced from the Ontario Ministry of Education website.

The goal of the literature review was to not only gain knowledge regarding the aforementioned topics, but to also situate this project, the primer, in a wide body of knowledge (Creswell, 2013). Firstly, an extensive search regarding the benefits of second-language learning was conducted. Based on the conclusions of various seminal as well as current research studies, advantages of being in a second-language learning program were found, including students having added cognitive, interpersonal, and economic advantages than those enrolled in regular curricular programming (Lazaruk, 2007, p. 617). In addition, a literature review was also necessary in order to identify and meet existing gaps in the literature (Creswell, 2013). As is the case in this project, in spite of the identified advantages of French Immersion programming, the need for added skill development in French oral communication was established. The *Student Proficiency and Confidence Pilot Project 2013-2014: A Synopsis of Findings* maintains this need, as it found areas of strength in the written production of French Immersion students “while the connection with oral skills shows the most room for improvement ... [and for one specific group of learners, at the B1 level,] higher confidence in the oral skills was connected to higher proficiency in these skills” (Rehmer, 2014, p. 8).

Next, the literature on authentic learning and Invitational Theory offered knowledge that their implementation in pedagogical strategies in Canadian and World Studies courses within French Immersion programs might benefit the learners. As Purkey (1992) discusses, Invitational Theory “provide[s] a means of intentionally summoning

people to realize their relatively boundless potential in all areas of worthwhile human endeavor” (p. 5) and its embedding in a class culture allows for students to feel cared for and safe. With the French as a Second Language and the Canadian and World Studies curriculums challenging students to communicate, discuss, and think critically, incorporating strategies that have Invitational Theory entrenched within them may encourage such collaboration. As a result, in a Geography, History, or Civics course within the French Immersion program, students would feel encouraged to share their voice in an environment in which they feel secure and “develop the ability to think and to process content in ways best suited to each subject” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013b, p. 13), as the Canadian and World Studies curriculum asks. What is more, students are not only taking part in classroom discussions and taking risks in their learning but are also developing their French oral communication skills.

The results of the critical analysis of the literature provided insight into the needs of French Immersion teachers in Canadian and World Studies departments and was supported with the creation of *Primer for French Immersion Teachers in Canadian and World Studies: Resource Primer of French Oral Communicative Strategies*. This primer was created to assist secondary French Immersion teachers in Canadian and World Studies departments in conveying curricular content to students through inclusive and collaborative activities that create a safe and positive classroom climate. As a result of these oral communicative strategies, French Immersion students (a) are involved in the learning of curricular content, (b) have a voice in their classroom which allows them to take risks in their learning, and (c) improve their speaking skills in French.

The primer targets secondary teachers in Canadian and World Studies

departments who teach Geography, History, and Civics intermediate-level courses in French Immersion programs. These specific courses were chosen as their curriculums lend themselves well to the aim of developing French Immersion students' oral communication skills in French. These three courses have a shared goal of allowing students "[to have] the skills they need to solve problems and communicate ideas and decisions about significant developments, events, and issues" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013b, p. 6). A caring learning environment that promotes student voice would allow students to share opinions and comments and further develop their speaking skills in French.

The goal of this primer is to act as an introductory tool for teachers to use in order to create a classroom climate that encourages students to take risks in their learning in sharing their opinions and asking questions. The first part of the primer provides a succinct body of research regarding the benefits of second-language learning as well as information regarding the advantages of using authentic learning strategies and Invitational Theory in the classroom. This knowledge serves as background knowledge for teachers wishing to understand the aim of the primer. Teachers will also find curricular material in an effort to make links between the authentic learning strategies and curricular expectations.

The second part of the primer presents a series of pedagogical strategies and activities taken from a variety of existing research and work on authentic and collaborative learning as well as Invitational Theory. Teachers are not required to follow a strategy as prescribed in the primer but can make use of it and modify it based on the needs of their students as well as the course under study. In order to genuinely create a

culture of care wherein students feel safe to communicate, it is imperative for teachers to consider the prompting questions that are listed preceding the strategies. This allows teachers to truly change their way of thinking and practice in order for students to feel cared for and to take risks in their learning.

Limitations

The research in this project is limited in that there is an inadequate amount of literature related to the links between authentic learning strategies and the development of French Immersion students' speaking skills in French. While the selection of literature analyzed has merit in itself, there has not yet been any work conducted on the effectiveness of creating a caring classroom climate in order to promote oral communication in French that would improve French Immersion students' speaking abilities.

This project did not seek to involve any French Immersion programs and thus did not have any student participants. A critical review of the literature proved useful but examining the feedback of current French Immersion students might have offered a different perspective. In addition, asking current secondary French Immersion teachers working in Canadian and World Studies courses to evaluate and offer feedback on the primer itself would have proved useful. These educators work firsthand with French Immersion students and could have offered suggestions regarding the potential effectiveness of such a tool. These responses could have been used within the final version of the primer.

Chapter Summary

French Immersion students represent a distinct sector of learners and have existing second-language needs that need to be met. While benefits of learning curricular

matter in French are clear, there are certain concerns related to the confidence and quality of French Immersion students' speaking skills in French. As noted earlier, the *Student Proficiency and Confidence Pilot Project 2013-2014: A Synopsis of Findings* revealed that students “were found to be most confident in their reading skills and markedly least confident in their conversing skills” (Rehmer, 2014, p. 8). French Immersion teachers in Canadian and World Studies Departments can be instrumental in improving the oral communication skills of their students through inclusive and collaborative strategies inspired by Invitational Theory.

The development of the primer required a comprehensive analysis of existing literature in the fields of second-language learning, French Immersion studies, authentic learning, and Invitational Theory, as well as a thorough examination of Ontario Ministry of Education curriculum documents. I used the literature discussing the need for French Immersion students to develop their oral language skills and combined it with the importance of creating a caring and safe learning climate for students from Invitational Theory. With this knowledge, the primer was created embedding the aforementioned literature, in order to present to secondary French Immersion teachers in Canadian and World Studies a set of strategies to help develop French speaking skills in their students.

Through the rationale, an examination of critical literature, and limitations, this chapter provided an overview of what culminated into the *Primer for French Immersion Teachers in Canadian and World Studies: Resource Primer of French Oral Communicative Strategies*, which appears in chapter 4.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRIMER FOR FRENCH IMMERSION TEACHERS

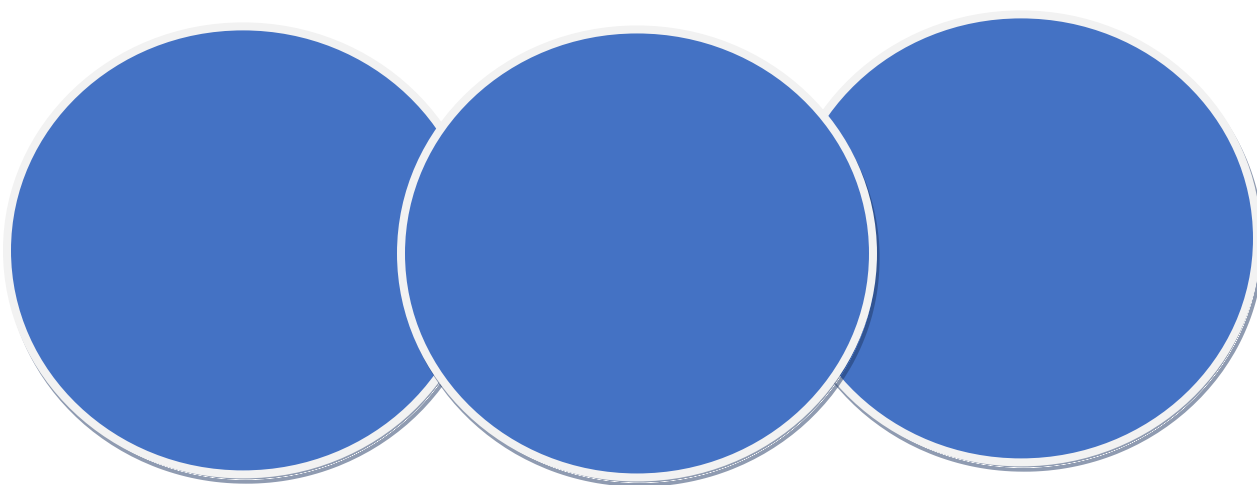
After identifying the benefits of second language learning and the current oral communication gaps in French Immersion programs, this primer serves as a pedagogical tool for French Immersion teachers in Canadian and World Studies departments. More specifically, this reference guide will attend to French Immersion secondary teachers overseeing Geography, History, and Civics courses in encouraging the development of French Immersion students' speaking skills. As a result of the implementation of various oral communicative strategies, students will gain the confidence and proficiency to practice speaking in the target language, French.

Many of the sample activities were selected from Bennett and Rolheiser (2001)'s collection of approaches in *Beyond Monet: The Artful Science of Instructional Integration*. These strategies can be effectively incorporated into Canadian and World Studies courses and meet the required curricular expectations. In addition, these activities are suitable for teachers hoping to create inviting and safe classroom environments for their students, as they lend themselves well to the principles of Invitational Theory. As a result of their application, students feel a level of comfort and safety which allows them to take risks in their learning in speaking and developing their oral communication skills in French.

The primer offers introductory approaches to encouraging discussion and conversation in Canadian and World Studies programs inspired by authentic, collaborative, and Invitational Theory strategies. The methods are organized under the following headings: Description, Application of Strategy, Suggestions and Considerations.

PRIMER FOR FRENCH IMMERSION TEACHERS IN CANADIAN AND WORLD STUDIES:

RESOURCE PRIMER OF FRENCH ORAL COMMUNICATIVE STRATEGIES



Developed by Kristen Salvas

Dear Teachers,

Planning for and learning in a French Immersion capacity is a unique endeavour for both students and teachers alike. While the benefits and advantages of knowing a second language in Canada are recognized, there are still ongoing challenges in the development of the French language skills of our students. In the intermediate years of the French Immersion program, students are offered the opportunity to study Geography, History and Civics in French. As per the Ontario Ministry of Education, students are to be engaged in content and subject matter that are to be examined using a critical and analytical lens. In addition to the expectations set for the Canadian and World Studies courses, students enrolled in French Immersion are expected to explore the assigned themes in the French language.

Moreover, there appears to be a perceived difficulty in maintaining the expectation of a “French-only” policy in the Geography, History and Civics courses in the French Immersion program. As research and anecdotal comments from teachers indicate, students feel a lack of confidence and are not fully proficient in their oral French language skills to communicate and speak in the French language. In content-heavy courses such as the ones found in the Canadian and World Studies department, there is opportunity to develop our French Immersion students’ speaking skills. Furthermore, teachers can approach their curriculum and teach it through authentic and collaborative learning strategies that encourage oral communication – in French.

Based on Invitational Theory’s premise of creating a safe and inviting learning environment, this primer is an introductory organization of teaching strategies that encourage authentic and collaborative learning. A safe and engaging classroom culture is created wherein students feel free to take risks in their learning and sharing. Moreover, these strategies promote critical discussion of subject matter in the target language. The strategies will be described and examples will be given as to how they can be implemented in subject-specific courses. The chief goal of this primer is to encourage students to question and comment on critical questions all while enhancing their French speaking skills.

The distinctiveness of French Immersion programs presents challenges to educators and learners alike and it is important for classroom teachers to promote the French language while addressing their subject matter. I hope this primer proves useful in an attempt to create a safe, motivating and “French-only” classroom community.

Thank you,

Kristen Salvas

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Introduction

Teaching courses in the Canadian and World Studies department to students enrolled in French Immersion requires a set of pedagogical strategies that motivate students to communicate in French. Creating an inviting community in which students can discuss and question the curricular content all while speaking in French reaps several benefits. Firstly, students feel safe to engage in dialogue with their peers and to think critically about the subject matter. Secondly, students are communicating in the target language – French – and with time, allowing them to gain confidence in their skills and become more proficient orally.

What Are the Benefits of Second-Language Learning?

Bilingual students demonstrate added mental flexibility, an ability to think more independently of words, superiority in concept formation and have a more diversified intelligence than monolingual students (Peal and Lambert, 1962).

The learning of a second language plays a role in the development of interpersonal and social skills. It was shown that those “who master more than one language increase their self-confidence and self-esteem and are more at ease with others” (Adam, 2005, p. 107).

Students who show proficiency in both French and English have more prospects in terms of employment opportunities (Lazaruk, 2007).

There are economic benefits for second-language learning in Canada. Research indicates that 88% of Canadians believe that people who speak more than one language are better equipped to succeed in today’s global economy (Parkin & Turcotte, 2004).

The Ontario Ministry of Education’s Framework for French as a Second Language in Ontario Schools (2013): The era of globalization continues to dominate wherein knowing several languages becomes both an economic as well as cultural asset (p. 3). As a result, students become more valuable commodities being able to communicate in two globally-recognized languages.

What's the Issue?

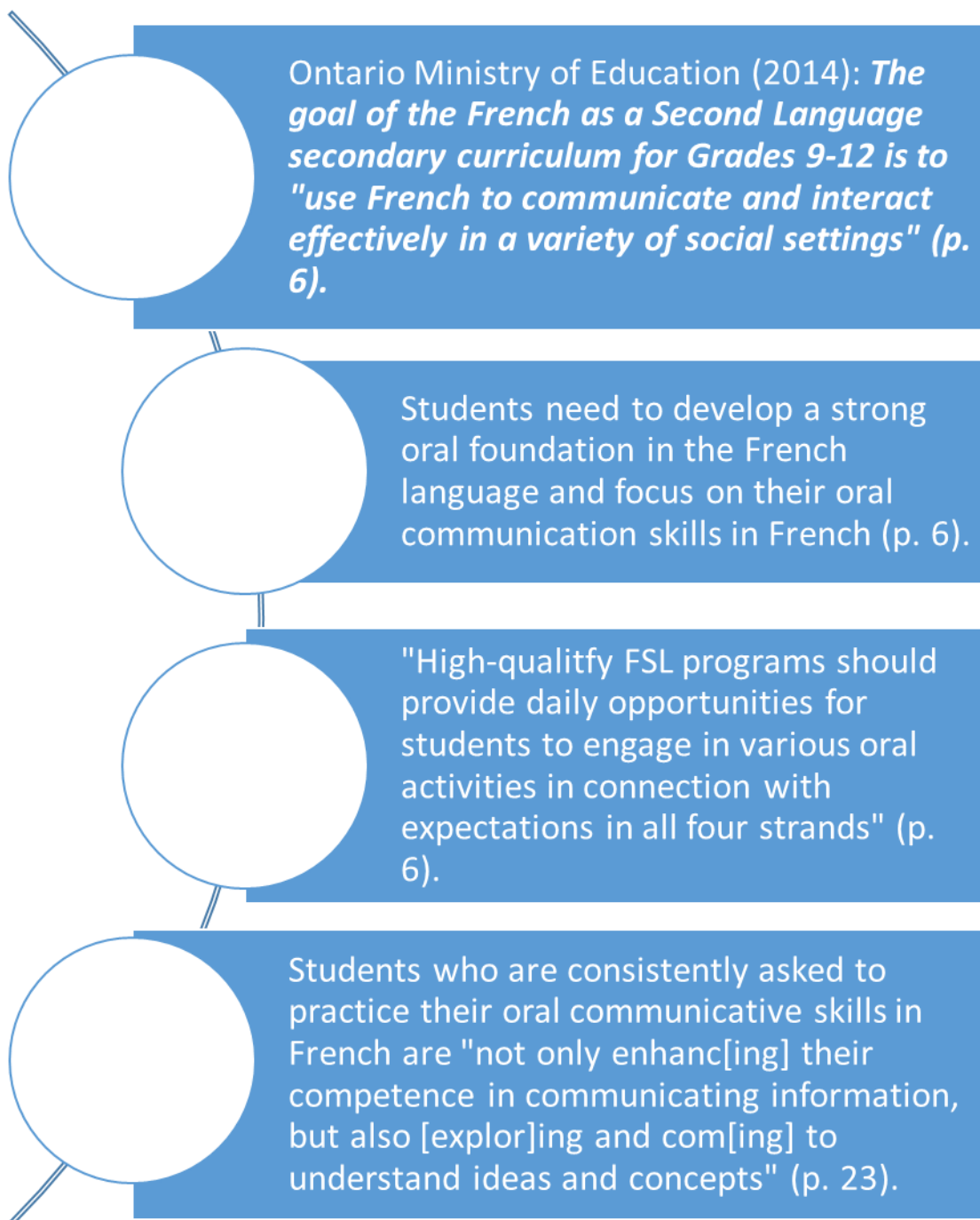
With oral communication being one of the four strands in Ontario's French as a Second Language curriculum, there should be meaningful opportunities for students to speak French.

While French Immersion students become proficient communicators of the French language, it is very rare for them to attain native-like proficiency in all areas (Lazaruk, p. 608, 2007).

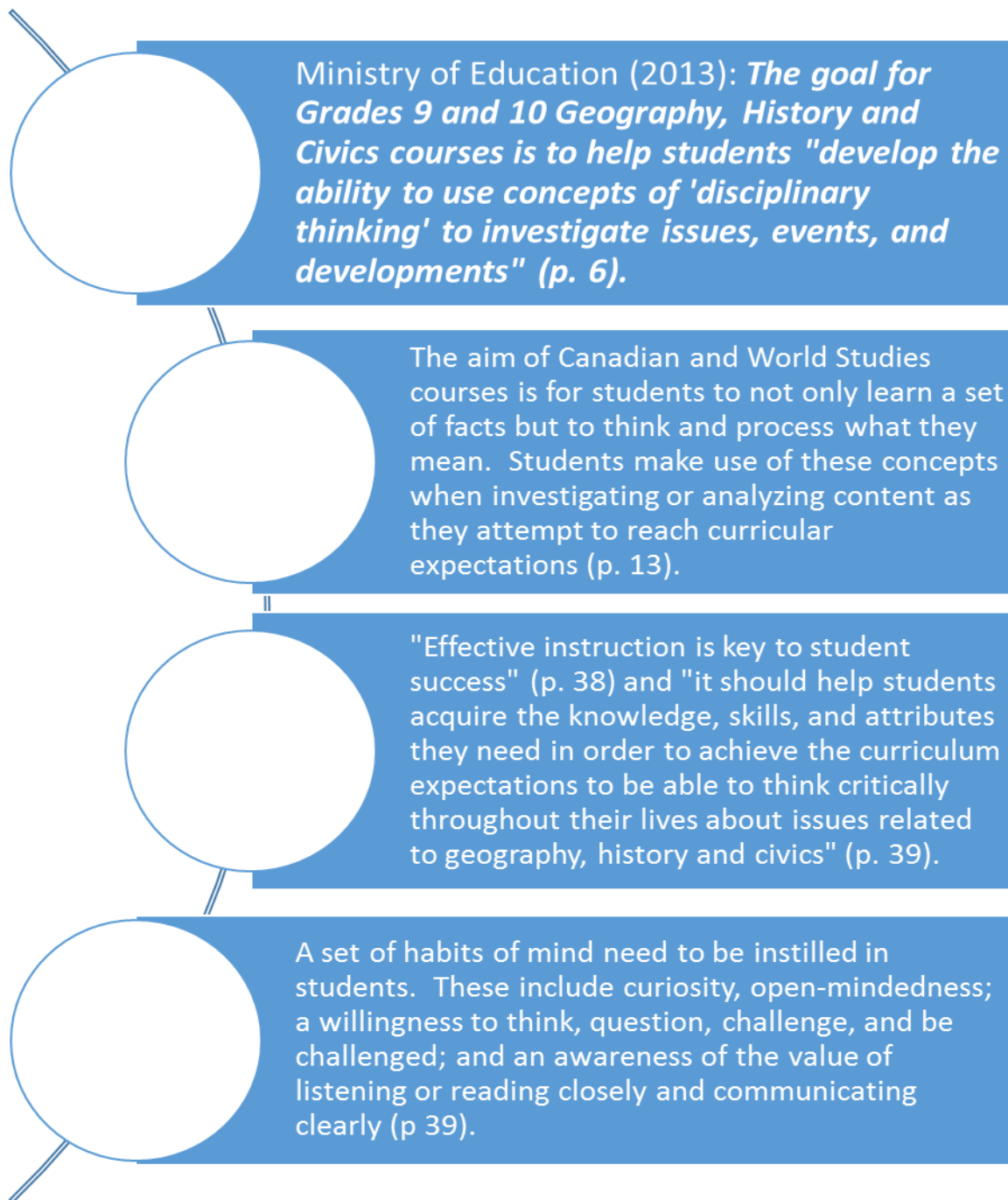
French Immersion students reach native-like levels in reading comprehension and listening skills, however, in speaking and writing, French Immersion students are easily distinguishable from native speakers (Cummins, p. 97, 2001).

The French as a Second Language (FSL) Student Proficiency and Confidence Pilot Project 2013-2014 found that students appear to be most confident in their reading skills and least confident in their conversing skills (p. 8).

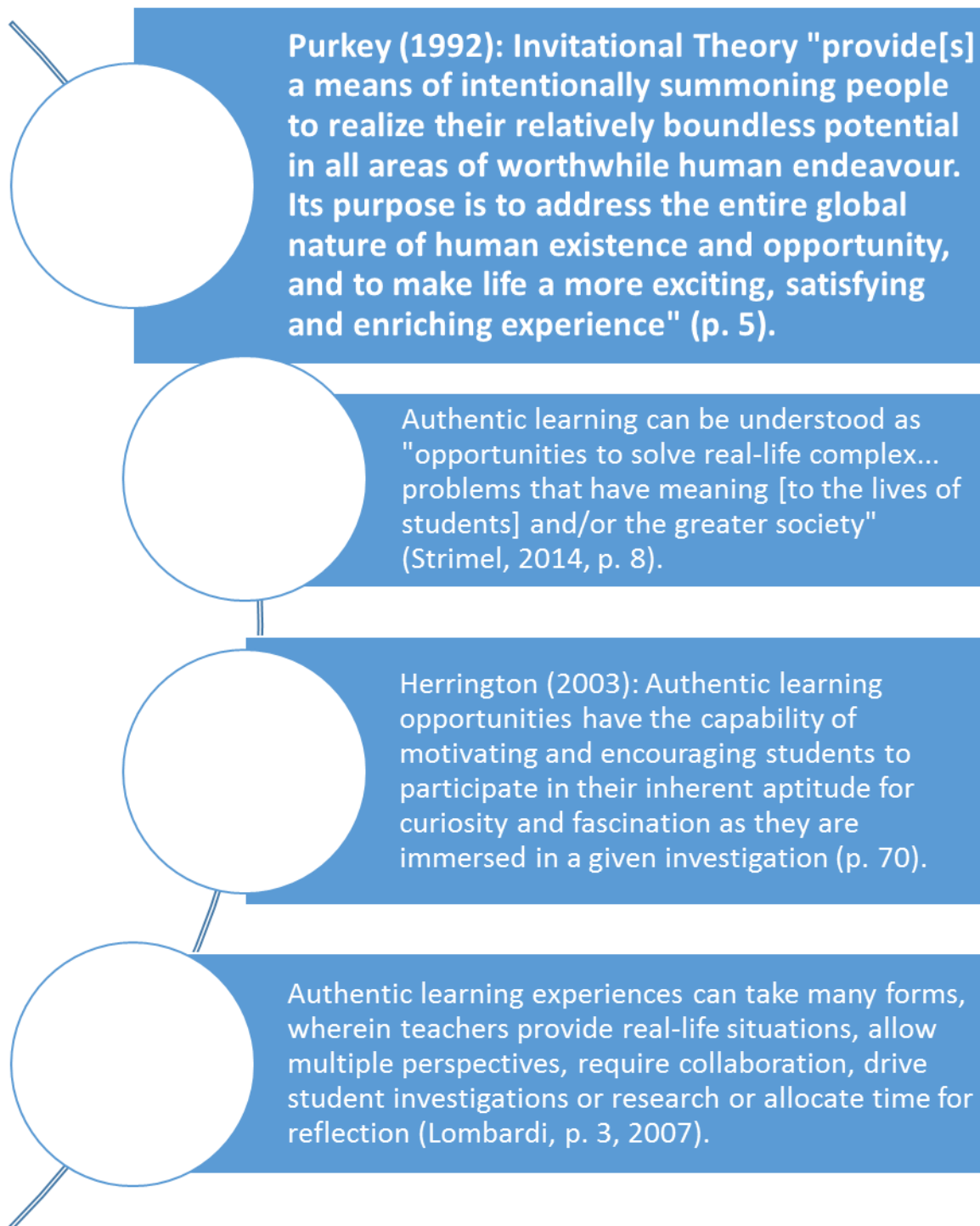
What Does the French as a Second Language (FSL) Curriculum Expect?



What Does the Canadian and World Studies Curriculum Expect?



What Are Invitational Theory and Authentic Learning?



STRATEGIES

The following section of this primer describes strategies and methods that make use of authentic and collaborative learning theories in order to encourage student discussion in French. Examples are offered as to how the strategies can be implemented in Geography, History and Civics courses. Suggestions and adaptations are also mentioned.

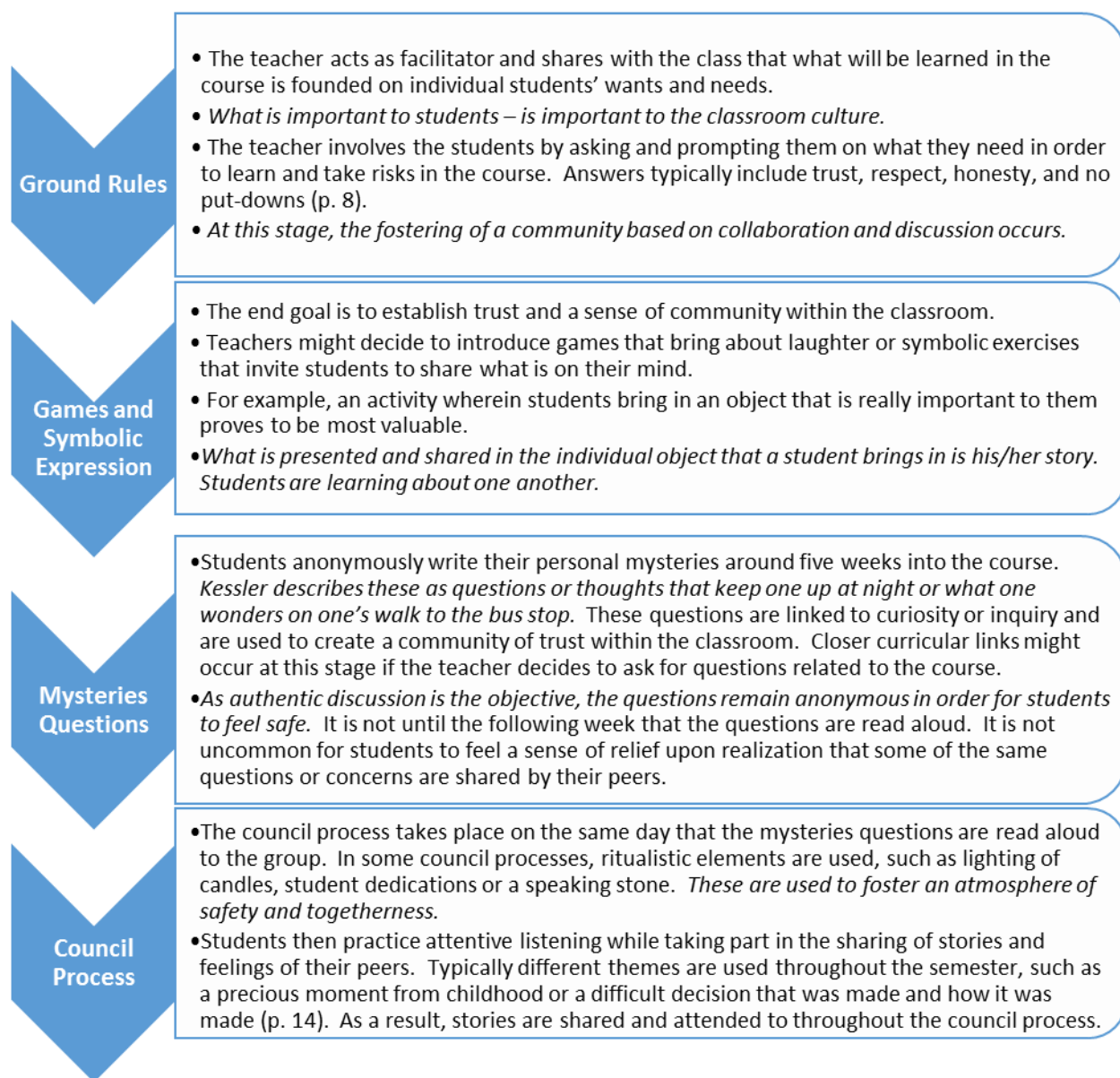
PROMPTING QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- How do I design a classroom climate that promotes a sense of risk-taking and care?
- Why is it important for my students to feel safe in their learning environment?
- What does an “inviting” classroom look like? What am *I* doing? What are *my students* doing?
- How do I create lessons that promote a culture of care and that reach curricular expectations?
- How do I expect students to respond to the use of collaborative and team-building strategies?
- What might be the end result of using the following activities? How will I know they were successful?
- How will I know if my students feel cared for and safe in our classroom?
- What might be a means of knowing whether or not my students’ speaking skills in French have improved?
- How do I encourage my students to discuss, converse and share ideas and opinions?
- Is “authentic” learning occurring? What approaches am I taking to limit off-task conversation or behaviour?
- What kind of preparation is necessary for implementation of these strategies?
- How do I model what I am asking of my students?
- In order to assess student learning, how might these strategies act as formative assessment tools?
- How can the following strategies be used in order to encourage students to be reflective thinkers *inside* as well as *outside* of the classroom?
- How can the implementation of these activities create a *transformative learning culture* within the classroom, one in which authentic and meaningful dialogue occurs?
- How can I emphasize to students the importance of creating a culture of care within the classroom wherein they feel free to take risks in their learning, and ultimately, improve their speaking skills in French?

THE COUNCIL PROCESS

Description

In *The Soul of Education* (2000), Rachael Kessler, a proponent of Invitational Education, describes tactics for creating a safe and inviting classroom in which students feel free to take risks in their learning. Kessler suggests a four-practice process that promotes an engaging classroom culture.



So what now?

Application

- ***In any course in the Canadian and World Studies department, the council process strategy would offer students an opportunity to delve deeper into subject matter as well as develop their oral communication skills in French.***

Situation

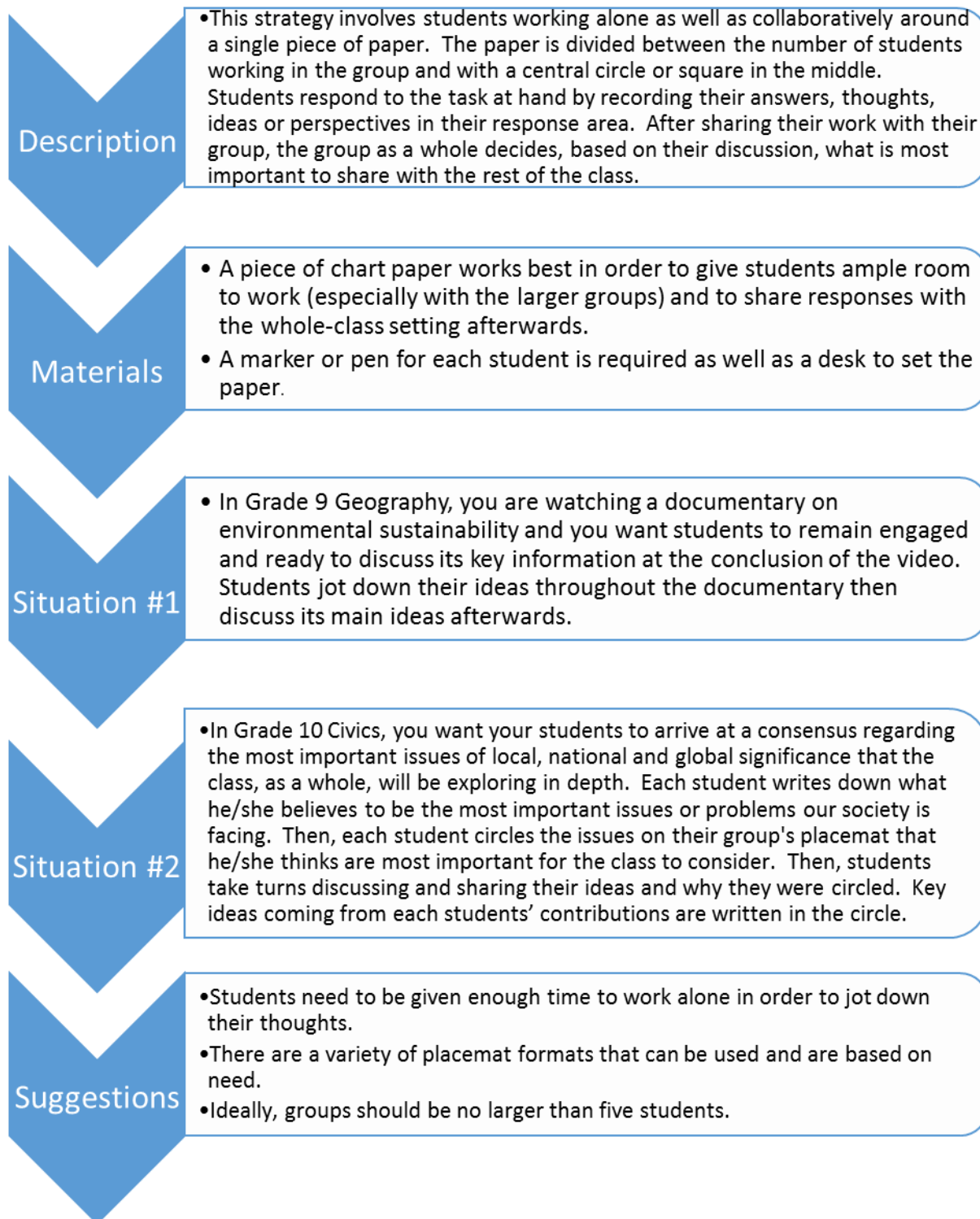
- Students in Grade 9 Geography might discuss the impacts of natural disasters on global communities around the world. For example, students may write down “mystery questions” that pertain to how families make relocation or rebuilding decisions after an earthquake or how communities respond to such earthquakes, making links to how their families would react in such situations. The teacher would then share these questions with the class and students would engage in meaningful discussion that not only has direct links to the curriculum but has relevance and meaning to the lives of students. In addition, students are asked to speak in French, further developing their oral communication skills.

Situation

- Students in Grade 10 History might discuss life during the Great Depression. For example, students might explore unemployment today and ask how individuals who are unemployed are viewed today. Or, students may share anecdotes from their ancestors who lived through the Great Depression. As a result from the sharing that will occur, students will make meaning of the Great Depression and develop their French speaking skills.

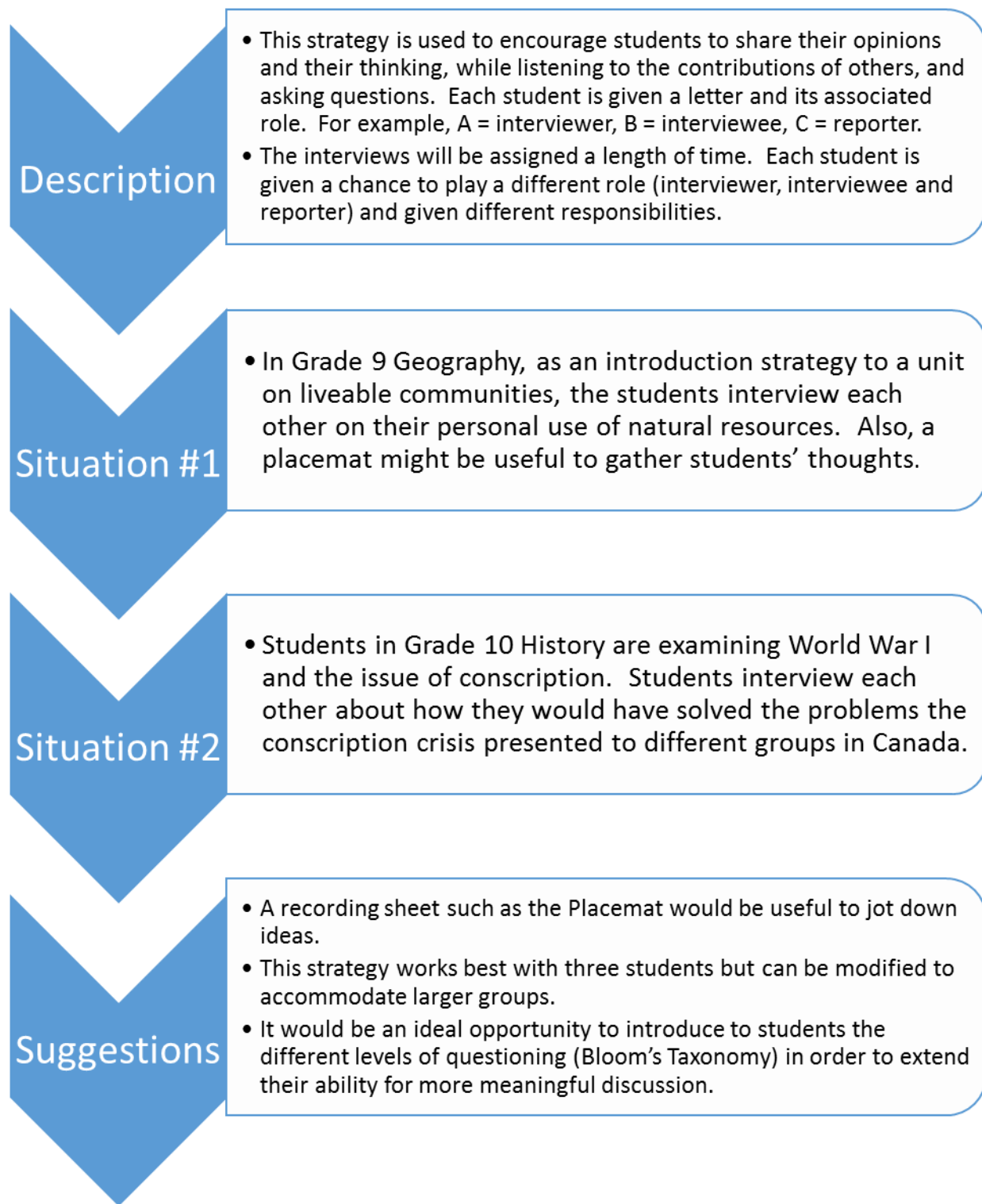
Suggestion: An option is to model an initial council process early in the semester in order for students to understand how it works. In this set-up, any question that crosses the minds of students can be asked, then shared at the council process meeting. At the next council process, curricular content may be examined and students will be aware of its expectations.

PLACEMAT



Bennett, B., & Rolheiser, C. (2001). *Beyond Monet: The artful science of instructional integration*. Toronto, ON: Bookation.

THREE-STEP INTERVIEW



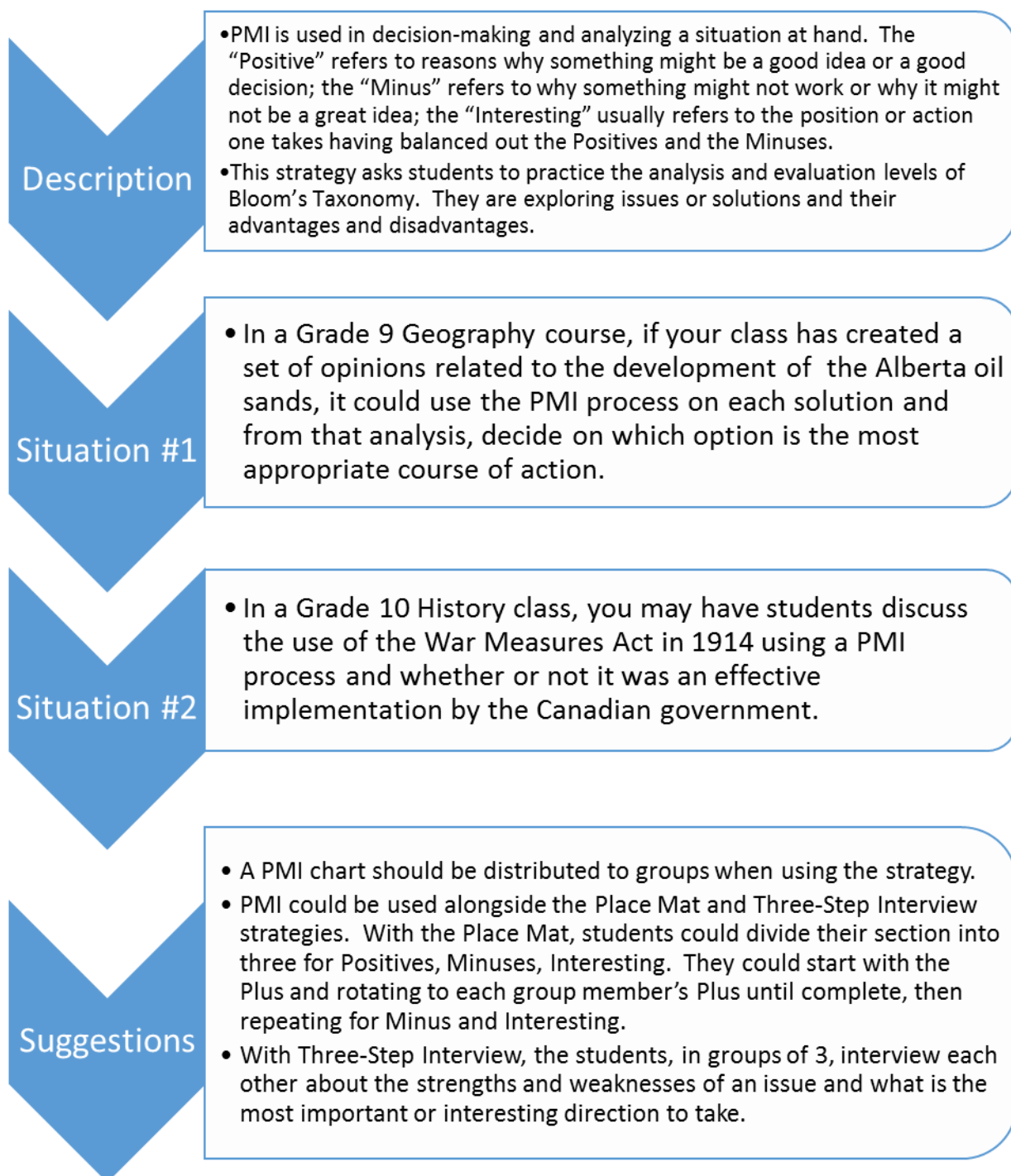
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ORAL GRAFFITI



Bennett, B., & Rolheiser, C. (2001). *Beyond Monet: The artful science of instructional integration*. Toronto, ON: Bookation.

PMI (POSITIVE, MINUS, INTERESTING)



Bennett, B., & Rolheiser, C. (2001). *Beyond Monet: The artful science of instructional integration*. Toronto, ON: Bookation.

EBS (EXAMINE BOTH SIDES)

Description

- EBS involves an exploration of differing perspectives and considers aspects of critical thinking. It asks students to look at situations or issues from a different lens. A PMI chart and discussion prior to the EBS activity may be useful in having students look at different sides.

Situation #1

- In a Grade 9 Geography class, you are assessing the economic, environmental, political, and social significance of a particular industry for a local community and examining the following question: “How would a new sports attraction affect a community?” using an EBS chart and discussion.

Situation #2

- In a Grade 10 Civics class, you are looking at key responsibilities associated with Canadian citizenship. Students are asked to examine the following question: Should people be fined if they do not vote? using an EBS chart and discussion.

Suggestions

- EBS can naturally flow into a PMI and a PMI chart should be used.

WALK ABOUT

Description

- The Walk About strategy involves one student from one group joining another group. As a result, ideas being discussed in one group move on to the next one. Students are held accountable in this tactic and is ideal for the kinesthetic learners.

Situation #1

- Grade 9 Geography students have just looked at issues related to the development, extraction and management of various natural resources. Students are examining the question: "Who do you think owns a resource, such as water or air, which crosses political borders?" Students talk to each other, in their groups of two or three then one person from each group moves on to another group to share their group's ideas.

Situation #2

- In a Grade 10 History class, students are using a Placemat to answer the question: "What was the significance of Canada adopting a new flag?". Once students are given enough time to answer the question and orally share their ideas, Person A will be walking about to a new group (this is determined and shared with students ahead of time).
- For example, Person A takes any relevant materials with them to join a new group. When the new member (Person A) arrives, he/she shares their group's thinking while the new group actively listens. Then, the group can share their comments, add ideas, etc. Then, person A returns to his/her original group with new ideas.

Suggestions

- Prior to students moving on to another group, it is important to have students number off or letter off.

GALLERY TOUR

Description

- A Gallery Tour is when students share their work from a lesson and explain it to their peers while standing next to it. 2/3 of the class are touring while the remaining 1/3 are sharing. Then, students rotate so that everyone has had the chance to share.

Situation #1

- You have discussed the internment of “enemy aliens” in your Grade 10 History course and want students to reflect, write, and share their ideas related to its impact on Canadian society and politics during World War I. Students would have previously completed a Placemat of ideas but now they are to simmer through the information, select the ideas that best summarize the big ideas of the importance of the internment of “enemy aliens”. Students are expected to ask questions (in French) as they walk through the Gallery Tour.

Situation #2

- Students have just conducted research and written out a placemat on a human rights activist in Grade 10 Civics. Students now take the main ideas from this research and post it on chart paper for their peers to walk through. They should be prepared to answer any questions asked.

Suggestions

- Predetermined tour groups should be arranged.
- A Placemat could be used prior to conducting the Gallery Tour.

FOUR CORNERS

Description

- A statement, an issue or a question is made. Then, students choose a corner that best describes their perspective, view or response. Students pair up or group up with those that made similar choices. They need to be prepared to explain their position after having discussed the subject matter with their group members.
- Four Corners is ideal when asking students to think creatively and evaluate their thinking. It is an ideal tactic to use before introducing debating.

Situation #1

- Students in a Grade 10 Civics class are given the following statement: In Canada, the right to vote should be raised to 21 years of age". The corners in the classroom are labelled: "STRONGLY DISAGREE", "DISAGREE", "AGREE and "STRONGLY AGREE". Students are given 30 seconds to make a decision and they move to the corner that best represents their stance. With their group, they share why they chose that specific corner. Then, the teacher randomly calls on students to explain their decision.

Situation #2

- In a Grade 10 History class, you are studying the causes of World War II. Each one of the causes is placed in different areas of the room. The students have to decide which cause they believe to be the major cause of WWII and why. The unit could begin with this activity and it could be redone at the end in order for students to compare their ways of thinking.

Suggestions:

- Independent thinking should be explained and encouraged in order for students not to move to the corners their friends select.

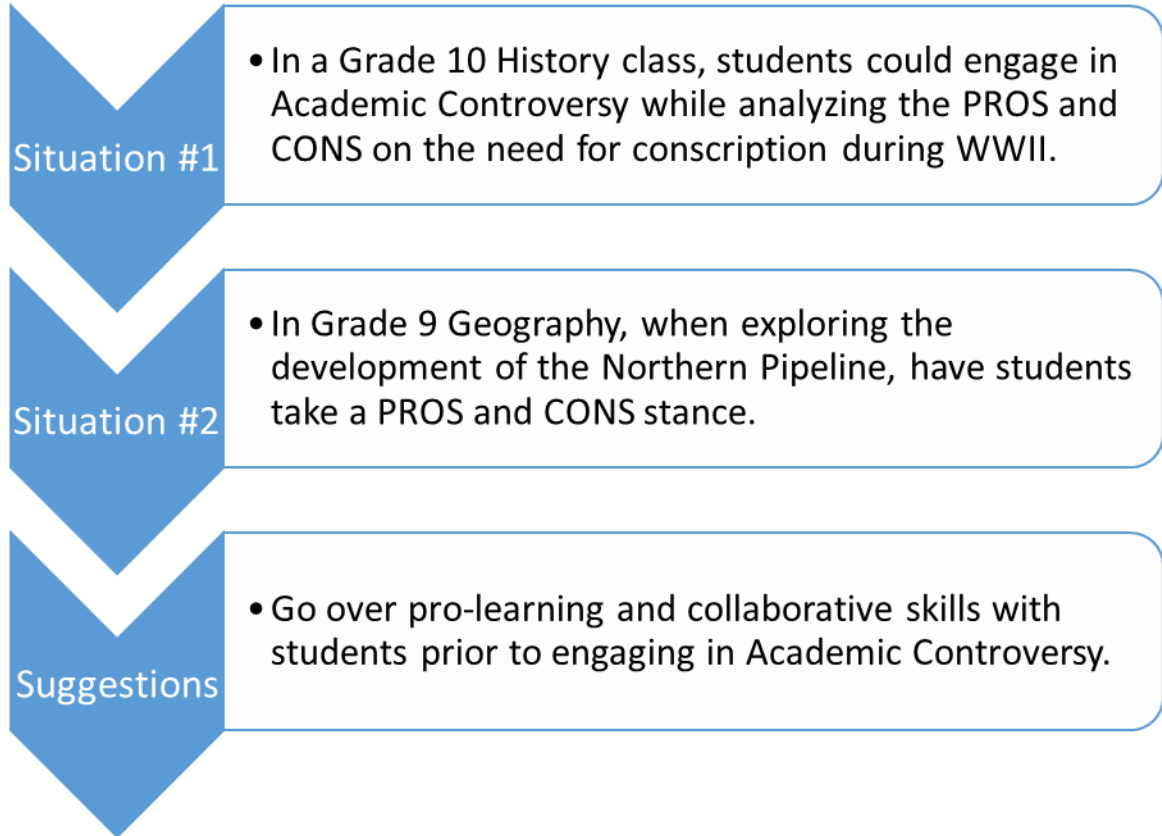
ACADEMIC CONTROVERSY

Description

This strategy should be used when students have developed a solid understanding of the topic under study. Students sit in small groups of four to six members and each group is then divided in half, with each half exploring opposite sides of an issue. Similar to debating, students will argue and present their case for or against an issue.

Eight Steps of Academic Controversy

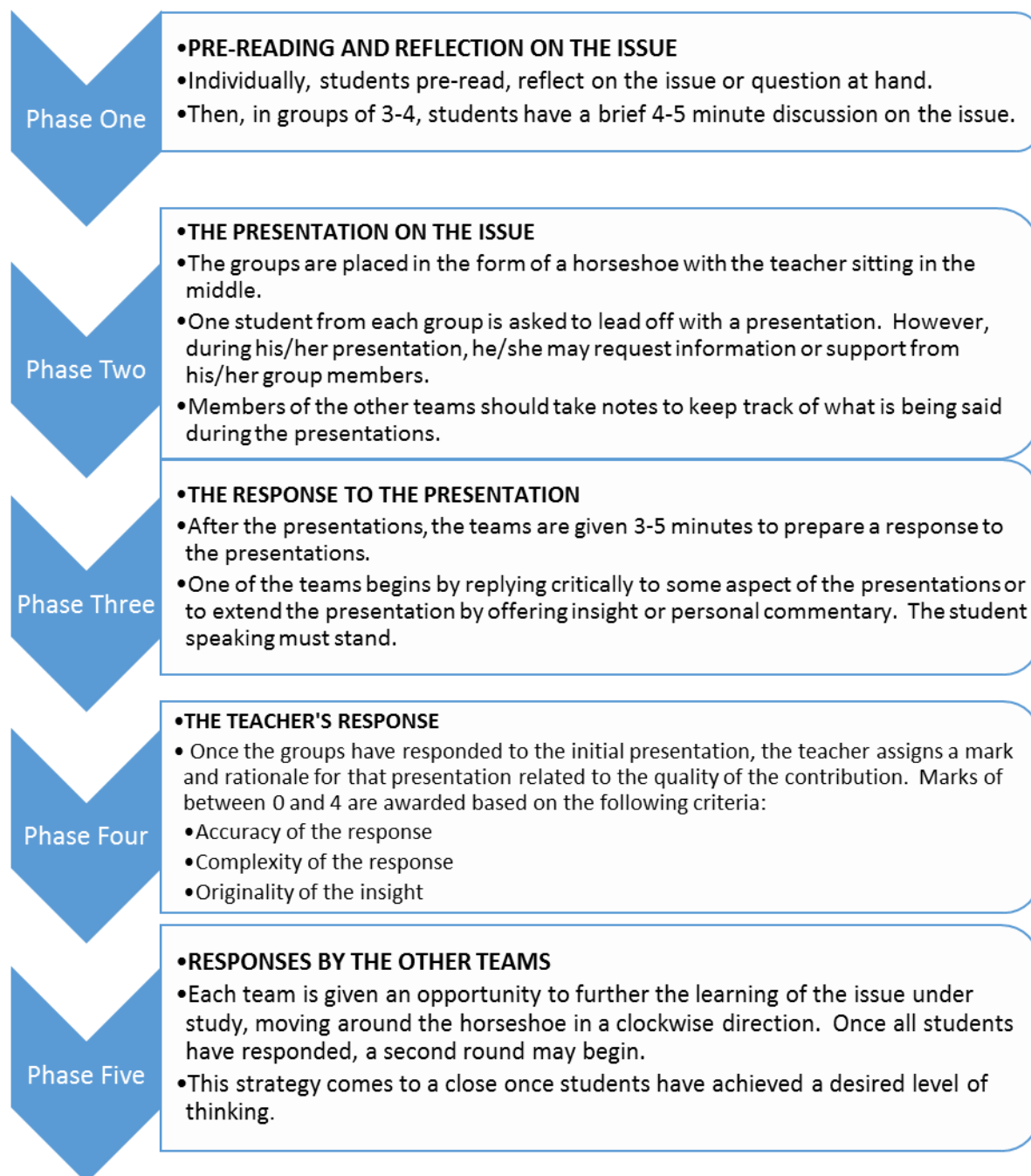
1. Identify the Controversy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are informed that they will be exploring both sides of an issue so that they do not have to worry about what side they are on initially.
2. Groups of 4 or 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letter the Students AA/BB and assign PRO/CON Positions and place students in groups of 4 or 6 and then letter them off. The A's sit on one side, the B's on the other. A's are PRO first; B's are CON first. Students should then number themselves off as A1, A2, and B1, B2, as they may be called on during the discussion --- individual accountability.
3. Time Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time to plan depends on the complexity of the issue.
4. Time for Each Group to Share	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The end result: students learn to present their ideas quickly and clearly. A suggested time frame is 60 to 90 seconds for each group and it is timed. The other group should be taking notes and demonstrating active listening. No interruptions.
5. Plan the Rebuttal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students discuss what they consider are the flaws in the other group's presentation.
6. Present the Rebuttal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> B's begin, then A's. 60 to 90 seconds is usually appropriate.
7. Now Flip and Repeat Steps 3 to 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have students stand up and change seats.
8. End with a Round Robin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students discuss where they stand on the issue.



Bennett, B., & Rolheiser, C. (2001). *Beyond Monet: The artful science of instructional integration*. Toronto, ON: Bookation.

TEAM ANALYSIS

Description



Situation #1

- In a Grade 10 History course, students might analyse primary source documents (census data) to gain a better understanding of Canadian demographic trends between 1914 and 1929.

Situation #2

- In a Grade 10 Civics course, students might analyse the various rights and freedoms granted to Canadians using constitutional and governmental documents.

Suggestions

- The mark system may be disregarded. It acts simply as a system of feedback for students.

Bennett, B., & Rolheiser, C. (2001). *Beyond Monet: The artful science of instructional integration*. Toronto, ON: Bookation.

Conclusion

This primer is meant to serve as an introduction to the implementation of invitational and authentic learning strategies that promote critical thinking and a development of French Immersion students' speaking skills. Courses in the Canadian and World Studies department offer students the opportunity to tackle complex subject matter in a meaningful matter that can promote the improvement of their productive language skills. French Immersion teachers in Canadian and World Studies departments can make use of these methods as ideas and can modify them as they see fit to their pedagogy and class culture. The end result is students interacting and questioning difficult topics in the target language – French.

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CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this project was to create a primer of collaborative teaching strategies that would assist secondary French Immersion teachers in Canadian and World Studies departments in creating a safe and inclusive classroom climate in order to help in the development of the French speaking skills of their students. A need for the improvement of French Immersion students' oral communication skills was identified in the critical analysis of the literature. While French Immersion students show areas of strength in their receptive skills, their expressive skills are weak (Cummins, 2014, p. 3). It became evident that secondary French Immersion teachers in Canadian and World Studies classrooms could target their students' development of French speaking skills through the use of collaborative and authentic activities that call for oral communication. However, in order for students to feel comfortable and safe in sharing their opinions, the strategies require a level of Invitational Theory, whereby students in the classroom encourage each other in taking risks in their knowledge-building, in a respectful learning environment. This project has an aim of responding to the existing challenges of oral communication amongst French Immersion students and offers a primer as a resource for French Immersion secondary teachers in Canadian and World Studies departments.

Implications for Theory

The project *Primer for French Immersion Teachers in Canadian and World Studies: Resource Primer of French Oral Communicative Strategies* was developed under the principle that knowledge of a second-language is central in being successful in 21st-century living. Peal and Lambert (1962) were influential in their findings of added mental flexibility, superiority in concept formation, and a more diversified intelligence in

bilingual students. In addition to scholastic advantages of knowing a second language, Lazaruk (2007) noted how mastering a second language fosters respect and appreciation for different cultures and Parkin and Turcotte (2004) make reference to the economic advantages of knowing French.

While the primer notes the fact that mastering a second language, in this case, French, is important, the current weaknesses in French Immersion programs are also addressed. The literature indicated significant failings in the speaking skills of French Immersion students. Lazaruk (2007) and Cummins (2001) both showed concern for the lack of fluency of French Immersion students and the clear differences between those learners and native speakers of French. Their work is consistent with Swain (1996) who found speaking to be the weakest skill amongst French Immersion students. More recently, *The French as a Second Language (FSL) Student Proficiency and Confidence Pilot Project 2013-2014* offers the suggestion that “increased focus could be encouraged, in particular, on oral comprehension and written production abilities, specifically as related to the application of grammar and vocabulary” (Rehmer, 2014, p. 3) in order to improve the communication skills of French Immersion students. The primer offers secondary French Immersion teachers a selection of strategies that promote oral communication. These activities are founded on authentic and invitational learning philosophies that engage students in a safe and caring environment. Opportunity for authentic learning allows students to discuss important subjects with each other and tackle meaningful questions (Strimel, 2014). Invitational Theory, which Purkey (1992) ascertains “given an optimally inviting environment, each person will find his or her own best ways of being and becoming” (p. 8), in combination with authentic learning

activities, would provide students the opportunity to develop their French speaking skills. In a classroom climate founded on core values of respect, trust, and optimism, students feel safe to take risks in their learning and speak up. Thus, French Immersion students are improving their oral communication skills in French. The *Primer for French Immersion Teachers in Canadian and World Studies: Resource Primer of French Oral Communicative Strategies* project is grounded on a variety of literature and research which give it merit in its use in a classroom setting.

Implications for Practice

The goal of this project was to create an introductory primer of ready-made activities intended for secondary French Immersion teachers in Canadian and World Studies departments. Teachers working with Geography, History, or Civics courses can select an oral communicative strategy and tailor it to meet the needs of their students in order to develop their French speaking skills. The primer acts as a preface for teachers wanting students to improve their oral communication skills in French by way of creating a safe and inviting classroom environment.

The primer places an emphasis on activities or strategies that ask students to orally communicate their learning. Students are either working in pairs or small groups to question, discuss, and collaborate in what they are thinking. These methods are meaningful and students are active and involved in their knowledge-building. As the classroom teacher is introducing a strategy, it is imperative that he/she consider the guiding or prompting questions presented prior to the outline of the activities. This allows the teacher to facilitate a culture of care within the learning environment in order for students to feel comfortable enough to take risks in their learning and, ultimately, develop

their speaking skills in French.

However, not all French Immersion teachers in Canadian and World Studies departments are aware of the need to develop their students' speaking skills in French and the ease in which they can do so. Teachers in this specialized second-language program expect their students to grasp heavy curricular content and question and build new knowledge. In order to authentically do so, teachers need to create a caring culture in which students feel free to take risks and participate. As a result of the introduction of the activities in this primer, teachers are not only building a safe classroom climate but are also helping students reach their curricular goals while developing their French speaking skills. With the assistance of the primer, there is an opportunity for educators to meet the expectations set by the Ministry of Education but to also genuinely have students develop their learning and improve their French speaking skills.

The theoretical and practical components of the primer lend themselves well to professional development opportunities for teachers wishing to extend their learning and teaching. The information regarding the benefits of second-language learning acts as a reminder of the intricacies of teaching in a French Immersion program while the discussion on the weaknesses of students' productive skills in French may steer instruction in a different direction—which may include additional opportunity for oral communication. The authentic and collaborative strategies will serve French Immersion teachers well in creating an engaging and motivating learning environment.

Future Research

The project was developed after an extensive literature review of various journal articles and curriculum documents in order to determine the need for the primer. Further

research might involve the participation of current French Immersion teachers in Canadian and World Studies departments. Gathering feedback from such practitioners, in the field, on the usefulness of the primer would benefit the validity of this project. Suggestions or modifications to the primer could then be incorporated and better the primer. Furthermore, it would be interesting to conduct a study to determine whether or not the incorporation of such French oral and authentic communicative activities helped develop French Immersion students' speaking skills. In one group, students would have been exposed to the strategies discussed in the primer while the other group would not have been provided such attention. Through the monitoring of student learning, the effectiveness of the primer and using a variety of authentic strategies could be determined.

Finally, while this primer is geared towards French Immersion teachers in Canadian and World Studies departments, future research might involve teachers in other subject areas. Perhaps, courses that do not typically ask students to orally communicate their learning, such as Mathematics or Science, might be involved. It would be interesting to note how such strategies in the current primer might work across varying subject areas.

Concluding Remarks

The intent of this project was to create a primer of introductory oral and authentic communicative strategies for French Immersion teachers in Canadian and World Studies departments. As a result of an implementation of these activities, French Immersion students may find themselves in a caring and safe learning environment, one in which they can take risks in their learning. These students not only develop a greater understanding of complex subject matter but also are given the opportunity to develop

their French speaking skills. Through a thorough examination of relevant literature, the importance of second-language learning and the current weaknesses in French Immersion students' language production, a need for the primer was recognized. With a theoretical overview in advantages to language-learning and Invitational Theory, the primer provides secondary French Immersion teachers in Canadian and World Studies departments an introductory collection of strategies to create a culture of care within their classrooms, in order to encourage the development of French speaking skills in their students. The project is relevant to French Immersion teachers in Canadian and World Studies departments and provides opportunity for growth for their second language-learning students.

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